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# TWO DISCOURSES

DELIVERED AT AMHERST,

By the Rev. Mr. BRECK,

BRITISH MUSEUM

Billings 1783

# A DISCOURSE,

OCCASIONED

BY THE DEATH,

AND

DELIVERED AT THE FUNERAL

OF THE REVEREND

## Mr. DAVID PARSONS,

Paſtor of the Church in Amherſt.

Who departed this Life, January 1, 1781,
In the Sixty-ninth Year of his Age.

By ROBERT BRECK, A.M.

*Paſtor of the Firſt Church in Springfield.*

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BRITISH MUSEUM

A

# FUNERAL SERMON, &c.

## II. Corinthians, iv, 7.

*But we have this Treasure in Earthen Vessels.*

ST. PAUL, although he was in a peculiar sense the Apostle of the Gentiles, yet retains a strong affection for the Jews, who were his brethren according to the flesh, and labours abundantly to wean them from their attachment to the law, and to bring them heartily to embrace the Gospel of Christ.

It is with a view to this, that the Apostle, in the chapter foregoing *that* out of which I have taken my text, is setting forth the excellency of the Gospel Ministry; and showing how much superior it is to the legal priesthood. The Priest, under the law were *Ministers* of the *letter*; whereas the Ministers of the New-Testament, were *Ministers* of the *spirit*, and then he adds, *the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life*,—see verse 6 The one was the ministration of death and *condemnation*; the other of *life* and *righteousness*,—The one a temporary dispensation, designed to continue only for a season, and then to be done away and give place to the other: But the Gospel to remain forever. The one a dark dispensation veiled

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under types and ſhadows; the other more clear, inſomuch that under the Goſpel, we do as it were with open face, behold as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, &c.

The Apoſtle having thus eſtabliſh'd the ſuperior excellency of the Goſpel Miniſtry, in our text acknowledges that *we have this treaſure in earthen veſſels.*

A treaſure we all know, is ſomething that we eſteem, and ſet a high value upon. Thus when our Savior would ſet forth the infinite worth and excellency of the kingdom of heaven; he compares it to a treaſure hid in a field.—*Mat.* xiii, 44. So God expreſſeth his great regard to the children of Iſrael, by their being *a peculiar treaſure* unto him,—*Exo.* xix. 5. Men's treaſure is what they highly eſteem, what they ſet their hearts and affection upon, agreeable to that in *Luke*, xii, 34, *Where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo.* So in our text the Apoſtle calls the Goſpel Miniſtry *a treaſure*, to denote the worth and value of it, and to ſignify what a great and inеſtimable bleſſing that people enjoy who are favoured with it,—But ſays he, *We have this treaſure in earthen veſſels*, i. e. in bodies, which as they were formed out of the earth, ſo like earthen veſſels are frail and brittle, and liable to be broken and daſhed to peices by innumerable accidents; and which though they may eſcape accidents, will in length of time moulder away.

This I take to be the meaning of the Apoſtle in the text, and accordingly the words ſhall be

further

further considered under these two propositions, viz,

I. That a people have in a faithful Gospel Minister an invaluable treasure, and

II. That this treasure precious as it is, is contained in but an earthen vessel.

I. A people have in a faithful Gospel Minister an invaluable treasure,—Or in other words, that a faithful Gospel Minister is a great and inestimable blessing to a people.

This blessing great as it is, may be rated too high, and the persons of ministers may be unduly valued; when a notable miracle was performed by Paul and Barnabas, at Lystra, the people cried out, *the gods are come down to us in the likeness of men*,—*Acts*, xiv, 11, and the priests were about to offer sacrifices to them. This gave the Apostles great concern, insomuch that *they rent their cloaths, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs why do you these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that you should turn from these vanities, unto the living God*, *Verses* 13, 14, 15, the persons of ministers are not to be revered as Gods. The Corinthians were culpable in this respect. When instead of uniting under the common name of *Christians*, and acknowledging Christ as their only Lord and Master, *one said I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos*: For this the Apostle sharply reproves them,—1. *Cor.* iii, 3.

Christ does not allow us to call any man here upon earth *Master*; nor to suffer ourselves to be

so

ſo called,—*Matt.* xxiii, 8, 9, 10, Miniſters are but men, frail fallible men: Therefore their perſons are not to be had in admiration.

However in the preſent day more go into the contrary extreme than this, and have not a due regard for the Miniſtry.

If Miniſters are faithful they ought to be *highly eſteemed in love for their works ſake.* I. Theſſ. v. 13. The miniſtry is one of the gifts of our aſcended redeemer. *Eph*, iv, 8—11. And it is a precious gift, and they that are bleſſed with a faithful Miniſter ſhould be ſenſible that they are therein highly favored of God, and that in him they have a rich treaſure: for this is indeed the caſe, as will appear to every one who conſiders.

I: That in a faithful Miniſter, they have a good teacher and guide.

This is what the world very much needs in its preſent dark ſtate. The underſtanding was darkened by the fall, and the candle, which God at firſt lighted up in man, was well nigh extinguiſhed by the apoſtacy. The apoſtle repreſents the heathen as *having the underſtanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their hearts.* Eph. iv, 18. Ignorance and darkneſs had overſpread the world, and if God had not taken compaſſion upon us, and made a revelation of divine things to us, the world had remained in midnight darkneſs to this time. Yea this is the ſtate of that part of the world, where the light of the glorious Goſpel hath not reached.

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They are now ignorant of the true God, of Christ, of the way of salvation, and in great uncertainty about a future state of rewards and punishments.

Well therefore might St. Peter speak of the light of Divine Revelation, as *a light shining in a dark place*, II. Pet. i, 19. And of those upon whom the light of divine revelation had shone, as being called out of darkness into marvellous light: I. Pet. ii, 9. God has in his word made discoveries of himself, of his son, and of the way of salvation by him, and life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel.

But notwithstanding all the light held forth in the scriptures, yet I doubt not the world would have sunk into Heathenism long ago, if God had not committed his oracles to a certain order of men, and made it their special business to study the sacred writings, to acquaint themselves with the truths of his word, and at stated seasons to communicate their light and knowledge to others.

Such is the darkness of the human mind, and such its unaptness to attend to divine things, and so many their diversions and avocations through worldly concerns, that I believe the light of the Gospel had been long ago extinguished, and the world covered with a cloud, and emersed into thick darkness, if it had not been for the institution of the ministry.

But God has set up *lights* in his church in all ages of it—his Ministers are called *lights*; Thus Christ says to his apostles, *Ye are the light of the world*, Matt. v. 14. and to Paul, *I have set thee*

*to be a light to the Gentiles, that thou ſhouldeſt be for ſalvation to the ends of the earth*, *Acts*, xiii, 47, when Chriſt aſcended on high, among other gifts, he gave to his church *teachers*, and he has made it their duty to give themſelves to teaching. The diſpenſation of the Goſpel is committed to them, and woe be to them if they preach not the Goſpel; if they do not deliver the whole counſel of God; if for doctrines they teach the commandments of men; if they corrupt the word of God or handle it deceitfully.

It is their duty to treaſure up knowledge, divine knowledge in their own minds, and to diſpenſe it liberally to their people as occaſion offers and their circumſtances require, and if they are Scribes well inſtructed, they will bring forth out of their treaſury things new and old. It is their duty to inſtruct them both in the doctrinal and practical truths of religion. *The Prieſts lips ſhould keep knowledge, and the people ſhould ſeek the law at his mouth, for he is the meſſenger of the Lord of Hoſts*, *Mal.* ii, 7, 'Tis a great mercy to a people to have a public teacher, as alſo a good and faithful guide to whom they may repair in private for direction under all the burthens, fears, doubts, and ſoul-diſtreſſes with which they are at any time exerciſed; a guide to whom they may apply for direction when they walk in darkneſs and ſee no light. Theſe are mercies, and ſuch a treaſure as this have a people in an able and faithful Goſpel Miniſter. Well therefore may a people conſider it as one of the ſoreſt judgments

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when God removes their teachers into corners, ſo that their eyes ſee them no more.

II. A people have in a faithful Miniſter a *kind and tender father*, and on this account may be ſaid to have in him a rich treaſure.

We find Eliſha crying out after Elijah, when ſeparated from him, *My father, my father*, &c. And we find the apoſtle calling the people to whom he miniſtered his children, *my children, my little children*, is the ſtile in which he uſually addreſſes them.

Miniſters are ſpiritual fathers to their people, a father loves his children, ſo does the faithful Miniſter his people. The apoſtle calls thoſe to whom he wrote *his dearly beloved and longed for*. How ardent muſt his love be, that he could wiſh himſelf *accurſed from Chriſt for his brethren, his kinſmen according to the fleſh*, Rom. ix, 3. None but parents are ſenſible of the tender affection of parents to their offspring, nor any but faithful miniſters ſenſible of the tender regards which they bear toward their flocks, the children that God hath given them. They pity them under all their burdens, ſorrows, and troubles of every kind, and gladly contribute all they can to their relief; they are eyes to the ſpiritually blind; feet to the lame; they have the father's bowels to their children when under temptations and trials and ſympathize with them in all their afflictions.

Again, as the father naturally cares for the welfare of his children, ſo does the faithful miniſter for his people. Timothy was eminent for

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this, and therefore the apoſtle ſays to the Philippians *I have no man like minded, who will naturally care for your ſtate*, Phil. ii, 20. Faithful miniſters do as it were travail in birth till Chriſt is formed in their hearers; and when through the concurring influences of the ſpirit, they are inſtrumental of begetting any through the goſpel, they like tender parents nurſe them up; are careful to provide food ſuitable for their nouriſhment and growth in grace. They feed them with the ſincere milk of the word, and they have no greater joy than to ſee their ſpiritual children walk in the truth as St. John ſpeaks, *John* iii, and growing up to the meaſure of the ſtature of perfect men in Chriſt Jeſus. Now ſuch a miniſter may well be eſteemed a great bleſſing to a people, and they ſhould not forget that they have a rich treaſure in him. Again,

3. A people have in a faithful Miniſter, a vigilant watchman, and on this account may be ſaid to have a rich treaſure in him.

The church at preſent are in a militant ſtate—They are in an enemy's country. We have potent and ſubtle enemies to conflict with. The apoſtle ſays, we wreſtle not againſt fleſh and blood, but againſt principalities, againſt powers, againſt the rulers of the darkneſs of this world, againſt ſpiritual wickedneſs in high places. *Eph.* vi. 12. God's people lie expoſed to a thouſand ſnares and temptations, and they need themſelves to be very vigilant, and this duty is often enjoined upon them in ſacred writ, *Watch and pray that ye enter*

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*not into temptation.* Mat. xxvi. 41. None ſhould be ſecure, but every one, be their age or condition what it will, ſhould keep up a ſtrict watch, Thus Chriſt ſays to his diſciples, *What I ſay unto you I ſay unto all, watch.* Mark xiii, 37.

And people need not only to watch themſelves but to have ſome to watch over them. And this is one part of the duty of the goſpel miniſter, and he is not faithful if he neglects to watch over the people committed to his care. They are called *watchmen*, and ſaid to *watch for ſouls.* God has, as it were, ſet his miniſters upon the *watch tower*, that ſo they might keep a good look out, and deſcry danger at a diſtance, that ſo they may ſeaſonably ſound the alarm and give notice to the people, to prepare themſelves for the battle. *Ezek.* 33.

O Sirs, a faithful watchman is a great bleſſing in ſuch a ſtate as the preſent. A faithful miniſter is a vigilant watchman, and therefore a people have a rich treaſure in him.

4. A good miniſter is a great bleſſing to a people, becauſe that in him they have a faithful Shepherd.

The church of God is often compared to a flock; thus Chriſt ſays; *fear not little flock*, &c,— *Luke*, xii, 32, they are called *the flock of God*,— I. *Peter*, v, 2, his ſheep; and Miniſters are called Shepherds:

Their buſineſs is to feed the flock of God: Thus Chriſt charges Peter, *feed my ſheep and feed my lambs*; and Peter charges the elders, *feed the flock of God which is among you.* Their

Their buſineſs alſo is to defend the flock, and if they do not, they are not faithful ſhepherds, but hirelings, according to what Chriſt ſays,—*John*, x, 12, 13, again it is the duty of miniſters to lead and guide, and go before their flocks. To be enſamples to them of a virtuous and holy life. Thus Chriſt ſays, ſpeaking of the good Shepherd, *he goeth before them and the ſheep follow him, for they know his voice*,—*John*, x, 4. a miniſter who is vicious and immoral in his life, is far from deſerving the character of *faithful*. This is an important branch of his duty, and therefore the Apoſtle charges Timothy, *be thou an example of the believer, in word, in converſation, in charity, in ſpirit, in faith, in purity*. If a miniſter is not exemplary in his life, his preaching is like to do but little good.

Indeed miniſters are but men, men of like paſſions, and therefore perfect examples are not to be expected from them. But if a miniſter does, as if he is faithful he will do, go before his flock in the exerciſe and practice of the chriſtian graces, he may hope that his people will hear his voice and follow him. Example is more powerful than precept. But not further to enlarge upon this head, a people have a rich treaſure in a faithful Miniſter, as they have in him, a good Shepherd. Fifthly,

5. Faithful Miniſters are conſtant and fervent interceſſors, at the throne of grace for their people, and on this account are great bleſſings to them.

We

We ſtand in need of the prayers of our people, and are ready to call upon them, and ſay as the Apoſtle did to the Theſſalonians, *brethren pray for us*,---I. *Theſſalonians*, v, 25. Faithful Miniſters prize the prayers of their people, and bleſs God for them.

People alſo ſtand in need of the prayers of their Miniſters. Miniſters if they are faithful will be often upon their knees before the throne of grace, pleading in behalf of their flocks with the great ſhepherd, commending them to the grace of God, and ſeeking for them the mercies which they need.

And in time of general diſtreſs, they double their earneſtneſs; they will not ceaſe day nor night to pray for them, but wreſtle mightily with God in their behalf; they will pray with them and for them, and will not give God nor themſelves any reſt, till they prevail. And we know that the effectual fervent prayer of righteous miniſters, as well as people, availeth much. How often did Moſes, by his powerful interceſſion, turn away wrath from Iſrael, and as it were overpower God by his pleading,—ſee *Exo.* xxxii, 9, 10, people do not know how often they are ſaved from ruin, and how many of their bleſſings they receive through the interceſſion of their faithful miniſters,

Again,

6, The truth of our propoſition will further appear if we conſider that in a faithful miniſter, people have a faithful reprover.

Reproof

Reproof is an irkſome and unpleaſing duty to both parties: This is the reaſon why people are generally ſo backward, both to give and receive reproof. It is indeed a very difficult duty, and requires great wiſdom and prudence to do it to good purpoſe. However all need more or leſs of it, becauſe the beſt are imperfect, make a thouſand miſtakes, and are often going aſtray; and reproof wiſely adminiſtered, is oftentimes ſerviceable, very ſerviceable, through the bleſſing of God accompanying it. The Pſalmiſt ſays, *Let the righteous ſmite me it ſhall be a kindneſs, and let him reprove me, it ſhall be an excellent oyl it ſhall not break my head.* Pſal. cxli, 5. And the wiſe man ſays, *As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, ſo is a wiſe reprover upon an obedient ear.* Prov. xxv, 12. Now reproof is one part of a miniſter's duty; the apoſtle charges Timothy to *reprove, rebuke and exhort*, II Tim. iv. 2. And if a miniſter is faithful, as he will not fail to find occaſion, ſo he will not fail to adminiſter reproofs, and that publicly and privately, as he ſees needful, and however diſguſtful this may ſometimes be to people; yet it is really a friendly act, oftentimes does good, and ſhould be eſteemed as one part of that rich treaſure which a people have in a faithful miniſter.

7. In a faithful Miniſter a people have a conſtant monitor or remembrancer, and conſidered in this light, ought to be eſteemed a great bleſſing.

People need not only to be taught and inſtructed in their duty, but to be conſtantly put in mind of

of it. They are very apt to be regardleſs and forgetful, and therefore need to have line upon line, and precept upon precept, and therefore miniſters are charged not only to teach but to exhort, yea to give themſelves to exhortation: And perhaps this is as important a branch of duty as teaching, and accordingly we find Paul charging Timothy to *put people in remembrance of theſe things*, and Peter reſolves as in II. Eph. i, 12. *I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of theſe things, though ye know them, and be eſtabliſhed in the preſent truth.* People need to be reminded of their duty, and to have it urged and preſſed upon them: And they ought to eſteem it a great favor if God has given them a miniſter who gives himſelf to this buſineſs, and does not neglect to ſtir up their pure minds by way of remembrance. I have one thing more to add,

8. In a faithful miniſter a people have one to adminiſter the chriſtian ordinances and break the bread of life to them.

As parents receive their children from God, ſo it is but right and proper that they ſhould give them up to him. This is done in baptiſm, and by this light our children are brought into the viſible church of God. This is the badge of a diſciple of Chriſt. Baptiſm is the ſeal of the righteouſneſs of Faith. Now none but the miniſters of Chriſt are authoriſed to confer this badge.

Further, the ſacrament of the ſupper is a mighty comforting, quickening and profitable ordinance, and none but Chriſt's miniſters are em-

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powered to break the bread of life to his people, and on this account a faithful minister is a great blessing to a people, as he will not fail to give to every one qualified and offering himself, a portion in due season. I must not enlarge. Enough has been said to shew that a people have in a faithful minister an invaluable treasure. I now come to the second thing.

II. This treasure precious as it is, is contained in *earthen vessels: We have this treasure in earthen vessels*, i. e. as we have taken notice, in *bodies*, which as they were formed out of the earth, so like earthen vessels are frail and brittle, and liable to be broken by innumerable accidents, and which though they may escape casualties, will in length of time moulder away. Here,

1. Our bodies like *earthen vessels* were formed out of the earth. Thus Moses in his history of the creation informs us that *the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground*, Gen. ii, 7. And Eliphaz speaks of mankind as *dwelling in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust*: Job iv, 19. and Elihu says, Job xxxiii, 6. *I also am formed out of the clay.* On this account our bodies may be compared to earthen vessels. 2. Our bodies like earthen vessels are frangible brittle things, and liable to be broken and dashed to pieces by innumerable accidents.

There are a multitude of diseases to which our bodies are incident, any of which are sufficient to destroy them, and render them unfit tabernacles for the soul to reside in. And we are

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in danger not only from diſeaſes, but a ſmall blow, a little fall, may and often has brought on inſtant death. It is really a wonder, and it muſt be aſcribed to the ſpecial interpoſition of Divine Providence, that any do live to what is commonly called old age.

3. If our bodies eſcape diſeaſes, and meet with no evil accidents, yet like earthen veſſels they will in time moulder and wear away. I ſay *in time*, and indeed in a little time. Three ſcore years and ten is but a ſhort ſpace, and is ſoon gone; and yet there are but few that exceed this. Altho' no violent diſtemper arreſts them, or evil accident befals them, yet our earthly tabernacles, after a few years will decay. Every blaſt will make them totter, and they will ſoon tumble into duſt and ruin.

Nothing now remains but that I make application of what has been ſaid. And

1. If people have ſuch a rich treaſure in a faithful Goſpel Miniſter, then certainly they ought to prize and improve it while they have it.

As we have already obſerved, the perſons of miniſters may be had in too great admiration, a people may make Gods of them. But although ſome may have gone into this extreme, yet more have fallen into the oppoſite one, and not prized them enough.

Faithful miniſters are worthy of honor. The apoſtle beſought the Theſſalonians *to know them which labored among them, and were over them in the Lord; and to eſteem them very highly in love for their*

*their works ſake.* And again he exhorts, *Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, eſpecially they who labour in the word and doctrine.* I Tim. v, 17. And if miniſters are duly honored, their miniſtrations will be attended upon, and people will improve the treaſure while they have it, conſidering that this treaſure is in earthen veſſels, which are liable to be broken and the treaſure to be loſt.

Miniſters have the ſame frail bodies that others have, and are not ſuffered to continue by reaſon of death. A few years finiſh their ſervice, and they are gone. Our fathers where are they? The Prophets do not live forever. But this leads me to ſay.

2. If people have ſuch a rich treaſure in their miniſters, then they have reaſon to mourn for them when they loſe them.

The loſs of a faithful miniſter is a great loſs, and therefore calls for deep mourning; the whole congregation of Iſrael mourned for Aaron thirty days—*Numbers* xx, 29.

And undoubtedly this is your duty my friends and brethren of this church and congregation, under the loſs of your Rev. Paſtor. In him you have had a rich treaſure, and it has pleaſed the great head of the church to continue him to you for more than forty one years; and now it hath pleaſed God to remove your father from your head, you have reaſon to mourn; not for him, but for yourſelvs and for your children,—He is gone to reſt—he reſts from his labours, and he reſts

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from his bodily pains and difficulties with which he has been ſorely exerciſed for divers years, and I doubt not his works follow him. But in his death, you loſt a rich treaſure. I preſume you are now ſenſible of it, and may expect to feel it more and more.

I am not about to aggravate your loſs by a full account of his character; the early connection which was formed between us more than fifty years ago, and the inviolable friendſhip which has ever ſince ſubſiſted, incapacitates me in ſome meaſure to do it with impartiality.

However, you are all of you ſenſible that he was a man of ſtrong intellectual powers, had a penetrating eye, and was capable of looking into and examining a matter very thoroughly; he was truly a judicious man, and if you allowed him time, his judgment was as much to be depended upon as moſt men that I have been acquainted with; he retained his claſſical learning beyond moſt men of his age, but his favourite ſtudy was divinity. To this he early applied himſelf, founded his ſentiments upon what he apprehended to be the meaning of the word of God, and was univerſally eſteemed to be a ſound divine.

His principles were ſtrictly calviniſtical, and he was cloſely attached to what are called the doctrines of grace, and his preaching was principally converſant upon thoſe important points.

He was truly an able miniſter of the new-teſtament, and I doubt not, hath left a witneſs in your conſciences that he was faithful; and I take

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And undoubtedly this is your duty my friends and brethren of this church and congregation, under the loſs of your Rev. Paſtor. In him you have had a rich treaſure, and it has pleaſed the great head of the church to continue him to you for more than forty one years; and now it hath pleaſed God to remove your father from your head, you have reaſon to mourn; not for him, but for yourſelvs and for your children,—He is gone to reſt—he reſts from his labours, and he reſts

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from his bodily pains and difficulties with which he has been ſorely exerciſed for divers years, and I doubt not his works follow him. But in his death, you loſt a rich treaſure. I preſume you are now ſenſible of it, and may expect to feel it more and more.

I am not about to aggravate your loſs by a full account of his character; the early connection which was formed between us more than fifty years ago, and the inviolable friendſhip which has ever ſince ſubſiſted, incapacitates me in ſome meaſure to do it with impartiality.

However, you are all of you ſenſible that he was a man of ſtrong intellectual powers, had a penetrating eye, and was capable of looking into and examining a matter very thoroughly; he was truly a judicious man, and if you allowed him time, his judgment was as much to be depended upon as moſt men that I have been acquainted with; he retained his claſſical learning beyond moſt men of his age, but his favourite ſtudy was divinity. To this he early applied himſelf, founded his ſentiments upon what he apprehended to be the meaning of the word of God, and was univerſally eſteemed to be a ſound divine.

His principles were ſtrictly calviniſtical, and he was cloſely attached to what are called the doctrines of grace, and his preaching was principally converſant upon thoſe important points.

He was truly an able miniſter of the new teſtament, and I doubt not, hath left a witneſs in your conſciences that he was faithful; and I take

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it that his labors were bleſſed with uncommon ſucceſs, and I am his witneſs that when he diſcovered any ſpecial degree of ſerioufneſs among his beloved people, he manifeſted great pleaſure and gratitude to the God of all grace, and to him he gave all the glory.

From a youth he diſcovered a great reſpect and reverence for the things of religion, and I preſume was never known to ſpeak of them with levity, and he could never bear to hear others do it. But although he was grave and ſolemn in his deportment, yet he was chearful and pleaſant; his converſation was both inſtructive and pleaſing. And I cannot doubt that you will all of you acknowledge that he was an example to you in word, in converſation, in charity, in ſpirit, in faith, in purity. He aimed at the character of the Chriſtain biſhop, and he greatly ſupported and maintained it.

If you went into his ſtudy, you found him there, either upon his knees pouring out his ſoul in fervent prayer for himſelf, for his family, for his flock, for the land, and for the church of God; or elſe with his bible open, and his pen in his hand, preparing a ſeaſonable word for the ſouls of his people.

And I queſtion not that many of you, who have gone to him under ſpiritual concern, are ready to riſe up and tell us with what gladneſs he received you, and with what tenderneſs and faithfulneſs he treated you; how he took you by the hand, and guided, and directed and urged you on, in the way to heaven. Many

Many of you have had opportunity to obſerve the devotion of the family; with what ſolemnity were the morning and evening ſacrifices offered up? Have you ever obſerved any thing that ſurpaſſed it? I muſt confeſs I never did.

And there is one thing which perhaps you may not be acquainted with. There were ſtated ſeaſons daily, wherein every one of the family were allowed, yea more the younger ones were enjoined to retire and pay their ſecret devotion to the deity.

And if you followed him to the houſe of God, how fervent was he in prayer? And how edifying were his public diſcourſes? He taught, he exhorted, he reproved with all long ſuffering and doctrine.

He had a great ſhare of miniſterial prudence, underſtood human nature, knew how to accommodate himſelf to mankind, and with the apoſtle he magnified his office.

He was a friend to all good men; he never profeſſed friendſhip but where he felt it, and might be depended upon as a faſt friend; a friend in the day of trouble.

He was not quick in forming a judgment upon either men or things; but when he had fixt his judgment, he was not eaſily removed, he was ſtedfaſt.

Theſe are only ſome outlines of the character of my deceaſed brother. My brethren, when God ſent him to you, he ſent you a rich bleſſing. You have reaſon to be thankful that he has continued

tinued him to you so long; and seeing he has taken him from you in such a difficult day as the present is, you have special cause of mourning.

However, you ought to acquiesce in the will of God, and say with our lord and master, *the cup which our father hath given us, shall we not drink it.*

My brethren we pity you, and pray for you, and hope that you will not fail to pray for yourselves, beseeching the great head of the church, that he will provide for you, and give to you another pastor, a man after his own heart, to break the bread of life to you.

And in this day of division let me earnestly exhort you to study the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

My Brethren, I can tell you with great truth and sincerity, I am deeply affected with my own loss in the death of your Rev. Pastor. I am more affected with your loss; but most of all at the sight of the sorrowful widow, bowing down under her burthen, and ready to sink under the loss of one of the most kind and tender husbands; and the children of my deceased brother, with their hearts ready to burst at the loss of one of the best, kindest, and most affectionate parents. I presume that there is not one in this assembly but what feeleth for you, and is now lifting up his heart to the God of all grace and comfort in your behalf, that he will support and strengthen you, and sanctify his hand to you.

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My dear ſiſter your loſs is great, you have loſt a kind and tender friend, and your children have loſt an excellent father. However, you have many things to ſupport and comfort you in your deſolate eſtate—your loſs is his gain. It is God that hath done it. He has promiſed to be the father of the fatherleſs, and the widow's God. And when *clouds and darkneſs are round about him, righteouſneſs and judgment are the habitation of his throne.*

I muſt not be tedious, and therefore haſten to ſay a few words to my brethren in the miniſtry here preſent, who perhaps next to the bereaved family and flock, are moſt deeply affected with the preſent loſs.

My brethren, we are going to commit the body of our deceaſed brother to the duſt. In a ſhort time, ſome muſt perform the ſame kind office for us. His time of ſervice is finiſhed; our day will ſoon be at an end; the voice of God in the death of our dear brother is, *be ye alſo ready, for in ſuch an hour as ye think not, the ſon of man cometh.*

We have a great work upon our hands; we have not only our own ſouls, but the ſouls of our people to take care of. What our hands find to do, let us do with our might, remembering that there is no work, knowledge, device nor wiſdom in the grave, whither we are haſtening.

Let us never grow weary and faint in our minds, whatever diſcouragements we may meet with; but let us be faithful unto death, and then we may expect to receive a crown of life.

I shall ask your patience no longer, than while I make a short address to this numerous audience.

My hearers, we are all of us mortal—'tis appointed for all men once to die—one generation passeth away after another—our fathers are already gone, and we are hastening after them. After a few years, not one of all this assembly will remain here upon earth. In a little time we shall all of us be numbered with the dead. May we realize this solemn truth, and not suffer either the business or amusements of this present transitory life to engross our attention: But if others will be troubled and careful about the many things of this world, let us mind the one thing needful, and secure the better part, which cannot be taken from us. Through God's sparing goodness, we still live and have the offers of salvation through the redeemer. Let us without further delay, accept the gracious offer; until this is done we are not fit to die, and when this is done we need not be afraid to die. But let death come when it will, and in what shape soever it will, we may bid it a welcome, assuring ourselves that neither death nor life shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

9 JU 64

*The Character of the Good Minister of Jesus Christ delineated.*

IN A

# SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE

# ORDINATION

OF THE REVEREND

## Mr. DAVID PARSONS,

To the Pastoral Office over the CHURCH of CHRIST in AMHERST.

On the second Day of October, 1782.

By ROBERT BRECK, A.M.
Pastor of the first Church of Christ in SPRINGFIELD.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

# AN ORDINATION SERMON.

## I. TIMOTHY iv, 6.

*Thou shalt be a good Minister of Jesus Christ.*

TIMOTHY, to whom this Epistle was wrote was a Bishop or Elder of the Church at Ephesus. I say *a Bishop, or Elder*, for it is evident that in the Apostolick age they were the same thing, only two different names for the same office. In proof of this, I have need only to cite to you—*Titus*, i, 5, 6, 7, where it is so plain that the *Elder* in the fifth verse, is called a *Bishop* in the seventh verse, that some of the best episcopal writers have been constrained to acknowledge it. The Apostle tells Titus the reason of his leaving him at Crete, viz. that he might *ordain Elders in every city*, verse fifth, then in verse sixth, goes on to give the qualifications of an Elder, viz. that *he must be blameless, &c.* then he adds, verse seventh, *a bishop must be* blameless, &c. Now it could be to no purpose for the Apostle to enjoin it upon Titus, to take care that the Elders which he ordained were blameless, because a Bishop must be blameless, unless a Bishop and Elder or Presbyter were the same thing. But not to insist here.

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The end and design of this epistle, out of which I have taken my text, was to teach Timothy his duty; how to behave in his ministry. Thus he says, chapter iii. 14, 15 verses, *These things write I unto thee, &c. that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God.* To this end the Apostle gives him many instructions and directions; and in our text tells him that if he observes them, *he shall be a good minister of Jesus Christ*; not barely a *minister*, but a *good minister of Jesus Christ.*

When I was prevailed upon to be your minister upon this occasion, these words occurred to my mind, as affording matter suitable for your entertainment upon this day. And my design is,

In the first place to draw the character of the good minister of Jesus Christ, or show what is necessary to entitle a man to it.

And secondly, I shall humbly attempt to remind my brethren, that servant of Christ, who is now to be introduced into the ministry, and especially myself, of our obligations to aspire after that character, and so to behave as that we may justly merit it.

In the first place I shall attempt the character of the good minister of Jesus Christ, and endeavour to show, what is necessary to entitle a man to it.

Now in order to a person's being entitled to the excellent and amiable character of *a good minister of Jesus Christ*, three things are necessary, viz. that he be qualified for the office; that he

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be regularly introduced into it; and that he faithfully do the work.

I design to say something upon each of these heads; though the solemnity before us obliges me to study brevity.

I. It is necessary that a man should be qualified for the office, otherwise he can never merit the character of a good minister of Jesus Christ.

Persons may be well qualified for this office, and yet never enter into it, and so not be ministers of Christ.

On the other hand they may be ministers of Christ and not be well qualified for the ministry, but without these qualifications they can never be *good Ministers*.

This is so plain and clear a case, that I presume none will dispute it. The only question that can arise here, is, what those necessary qualifications are. In answer to this I would say.

In the first place, knowledge is one qualification requisite to the forming the good Minister of Jesus Christ.

Knowledge, some degree of it, is necessary in order to a man's being a good Christian; but much more in order to his being a good Minister. *The Priest's lips should keep knowledge.* He that undertakes to be a guide to the blind needs to have eyes himself. Christ has forewarned us of the consequence, *If the blind lead the blind both shall fall into the ditch.* Matt. xv, 14. Persons may desire to be teachers when they understand not what they say, nor whereof they affirm; but tho' they may desire it, yet they cannot be fit for it

Knowledge is one neceſſary qualification for a miniſter, and a good degree of it is neceſſary to conſtitute a good Miniſter, otherwiſe he can never be a ſcribe thoroughly inſtructed to the kingdom of heaven. Unleſs he has a good ſtock of knowledge laid up, he will not be able, like the good houſholder, to bring out of his treaſure things new and old.

He will not be able to withſtand, much leſs to convince gainſayers. It requires ſkill rightly to divide the word of truth, knowledge to explain the great doctrines and duties of Chriſtianity, and ſtrength to defend them; and if Miniſters are weak, ignorant and illiterate, it may well be expected that the cauſe of Chriſtianity will ſuffer by the means.

In a word men are not fit to teach others, till they are well taught themſelves. And accordingly we find that when Chriſt for the more glorious diſplay of his own power, and that the faith of the primitive chriſtians might not ſtand in the wiſdom of men, but the power of God, choſe illiterate men, who had not had the advantage of a liberal education, to be his apoſtles, and the firſt preachers of the Goſpel, he in a miraculous way ſupplied that defect, we find the *gift of tongues, the word of wiſdom, and the word of knowledge*, I. Cor. xii, 8——10, mentioned among the gifts of the ſpirit, which were conferred on the apoſtles, and firſt miniſters.

However, in this age we are not to expect that theſe gifts will be conferred by the impoſition of

of hands, as they were in the days of the apoſtles, but ſhould take care that thoſe upon whom we lay our hands, are previouſly furniſhed with knowledge, otherwiſe we cannot reaſonably expect that they will do ſervice in the Miniſtry.

I am not inſenſible that ſome ignorant people, of an enthuſiaſtic caſt, have much decried the need of human learning: But as one obſerves, "it is certain that philoſophy and the other ſci-"ences, are not only very ornamental to a miniſ-"ter, but they are good handmaids to divinity." And I do not ſee how any can be qualified for the miniſtry, without an acquaintance with the learned languages, that eſpecially, in which the New-Teſtament was wrote. They muſt alſo be well read in the Scriptures, and furniſhed with knowledge of the whole body of divinity, otherwiſe they cannot declare the whole council of God to their people.

The Jewiſh church and the Chriſtian Church have therefore acted wiſely in erecting ſchools of the prophets, for training up youth for the Prieſthood: And whenever and wherever theſe ſchools are ſuppreſſed, it may be expected, that an ignorant miniſtry will ſucceed, and the ruin of chriſtianity ſoon follow.

2. Another qualification neceſſary, to form the good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, is wiſdom and prudence.

Prudence is very neceſſary to the well managing any buſineſs in life whatever. But perhaps, it is not more needful in any than it is in the mi-

niſtry. I am afraid this has not been ſufficiently attended to. Perhaps greater miſchiefs to religion have not ariſen from any one defect in miniſters, than from imprudence. Knowledge is like to do but little good, unleſs prudence is joined with it. Prudence is neceſſary to direct the miniſter in every ſtep he takes; when to preach and how to preach. What doctrines to inſiſt upon. What duties to inculcate; What ſins to reprove, and the manner of doing it. It is needful to direct both in his public preaching and private application to ſouls; eſpecially in his dealing with ſouls under awakenings and conviction, and with thoſe thate ar labouring under trials, temptations and darkneſs. Without prudence a miniſter will not be like to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon, and a word unſeaſonably ſpoken, may in ſuch caſes be of very dangerous conſequence.

But perhaps prudence may be never more needed than when a miniſter is called to deal with offenders. This is a buſineſs which calls for the exerciſe of all his prudence. It is very difficult for him to do his duty faithfully, and not give diſguſt, and ſo render his reproofs and admonitions ineffectual.

In a word, as a miniſter has to deal with a variety of perſons, and their circumſtances, tempers and ſtate is very different, it may be expected that he will commit infinite blunders in his treatment of them to the great wrong of religion. To add no more, the miniſter needs prudence

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to teach him how to conduct in his common converſation among his people; and as one obſerves, this will teach him to avoid a ſtiff affected uncouth gravity on the one hand, and a childiſh unbecoming levity on the other. Upon the whole it appears to me, that a miniſter with a ſmall ſtock of learning and good ſtock of prudence, will be like to do more ſervice than the moſt learned man who is deſtitute of prudence.

3. Orthodoxy or ſoundneſs in the faith is another qualification neceſſary to form a good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt. The apoſtle charges Timothy *To hold faſt the form of ſound words*, II. Tim. i, 13. And Titus, *To ſpeak the things which become ſound doctrine.* Titus iii. And the Apoſtle inſiſts upon it as neceſſary that *a Biſhop muſt be blameleſs, &c. holding faſt the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by ſound doctrine both to exhort and convince gainſayers.* Tit. i, 9. *The Prieſt's lips ſhould keep knowledge and the people ſhould ſeek the law at his mouth, becauſe he is the meſſenger of the Lord of Hoſts.* Mal. ii, 7.

It is therefore of great importance to the Church of Chriſt that the miniſtry be kept pure, free from any dangerous errors; for if *they* get out of the way, there is great danger that the people may be led aſtray by them. So that great care ſhould be taken by them with whom it lies to ordain Elders, that they do not introduce any into the miniſtry, but ſuch as are ſound in the faith——When I ſay *ſound in the faith*, I mean orthodox in their ſentiments about the great and

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important doctrines of Christianity. I say *the great and important doctrines of christianity*, because it is not to be expected that Christians will think exactly alike with respect to the lesser controversial points, and it is no great matter whether they ever do. Good may arise and no doubt has arisen from the diversity of sentiments among Christians upon these heads. But however a perfect uniformity of sentiments is not to be expected among Christians or Ministers in the present state, and Christians should not be offended either with their brethren or ministers, because they do not think with them in every punctilio. There are points about which the greatest and best men differ in sentiments, and that after many years careful study. These are things upon which the life of religion does not depend; and I do not say it is necessary that a man should be orthodox with respect to such points, in order to his being a good minister of Jesus Christ. No, I could cheerfully lay hands on one, if otherwise qualified, who did not think in these things as I do. Nor indeed do I think that candidates should be required to give an account of their sentiments upon these heads. It is not to be supposed that a young man, who has had but two or three years to study divinity in, can have had leisure thoroughly to examine those matters, and settle his judgment upon good grounds.

However unless a man be orthodox with respect to important points, he cannot be a good minister of Jesus Christ. And I will tell you the

rule

rule by which I proceed in judging, concerning the importance of doctrines. I first consider what is the great end and design of Christianity, which undoubtedly is to recover us from the ruins of the apostacy, and prepare us for heaven by making us like to God and Christ. Now when that great end is in no great degree affected by a doctrine, I judge that doctrine to be of no great importance, but, when I see this great design to be nearly connected with a doctrine, that doctrine is in my estimation of great importance. I take this to be the best rule whereby to determine the importance of particular doctrines. And I believe we had need to exercise care, that we do not make too much of our little peculiarities; for this is too too common with every sect and party.

4. Love to Christ and the souls of men is another qualification, necessary to form the good minister of Jesus Christ.

A man may be a minister of Jesus Christ *without it*, and his ministerial act may be valid: But he'll never be a good minister *without it*, because nothing less than this will secure him against unfaithfulness. He will not be willing to undergo the labour, difficulty and self denial necessary, in order to the faithful discharge of his duty. He will not willingly spend and be spent in the service of Christ and souls. He will be apt to deal with a slack hand, and do the work of the Lord negligently.

It was the Apostle Paul's ardent love to Christ and souls that animated him in all his labours,

and

and in all his ſufferings, ſee how he ſpeaks,—*Phil.* i, 8, *God is my record, how I long after you all in the bowels of Jeſus Chriſt.*

This is a matter of ſo great importance, that Chriſt puts it to Peter three times over, *Simon Peter loveth thou me?* And the ſame queſtion ſhould every one, who is entering into the miniſtry, put home to himſelf, and examine himſelf carefully upon it. For though a man hath every other qualification, though he is orthodox in the faith and underſtands all myſteries and all knowledge; yea though he was ever ſo wiſe and prudent, and could ſpeak with the tongue of men and angels, yet if he have not charity, i. e. be deſtitute of love to chriſt and ſouls; it cannot be expected that he will make a good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt.

However we cannot enter into the hearts of men. We muſt form our judgment upon what is external. And to be ſure a good life is much the beſt evidence, as it is the ſureſt index of the heart. This is the rule which Chriſt has given us to judge by, thus he ſays, *by their fruits ye ſhall know them,*—Matt. vii, 20.

This may ſuffice for the firſt general thing, viz. the qualifications neceſſary to form the good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, But this is not the only thing needful.

Secondly, 'tis neceſſary in order to a man's being a good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, that he be regularly introduced into the miniſtry.

Qualifications for the miniſtry is not the only thing needful to a man's being a miniſter. Many

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are qualified for the miniſtry, but it is only ſuch as are ſolemnly ſeparated to the office, by the laying on of the hands of the Preſbytery, that are really miniſters.

And in order to this; when chriſtianity is embraced, and a church gathered, 'tis neceſſary that he be previouſly called to the office by the brethren. It is evident that in all times of primitive chriſtianity, particular churches choſe their own Paſtors. None were to be ordained without the conſent of the people—and the taking away this priviledge is by Calvin called, "A ſpoil unjuſtly committed on the church of God."

It is evident from Acts xiv, 23. That the apoſtles when they ordained Elders in every church, did it by ſuffrages. That text according to Beras tranſlation, and agreeable to the ſignification of the Greek word may be thus read, "*and when they had by ſuffrages or election created them Elders in every church.*" And the learned Dr. Cotton Mather obſerves, "Our Engliſh Bibles themſelves, until they had undergone Epiſcopal correction, in this text put in the words *by election*, and the margin had this note, "*The Apoſtles did not thruſt paſtors into the church through a lordly ſuperiority, but choſe and placed them by the voice of the congregation.*" But not to inſiſt here, after a perſon is by the ſuffrages of the people choſen to the office, and has accepted of their call, it remains that he be ſolemnly ſeparated to it by laying on the hands of the preſbytery. None have a right to enter upon the office without ordination.

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Under the law, the High Prieſt, the Prieſts and Levites were by divine appointment ſolemly ſet apart to their reſpective offices.

So likewiſe in the chriſtian church, the ſame thing was practiſed. Barnabas and Paul were by divine direction ſolemnly ſeparated to the work of the miniſtry.—*Acts*, xiii, 12. And the Apoſtles *ordained elders* in every church; ſo likewiſe did Timothy and Titus ordain elders in the churches, which were under their care. And when any take it upon them to exerciſe the miniſterial function, without being ſeparated thereto, they do it at their peril. Uzziah King of Judah was ſmitten with leproſy, for invading the prieſts office which clave to him to the day of his death. See Chron. xxvi, 18, 21.

I go on, it is not only neceſſary, that miniſters be ſeparated to the work, but it muſt be done by prayer and faſting with impoſition of hands.—Thus were Paul and Barnabas ordained, as we learn from forequoted Acts xiii, 2, 3. *Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them, and when they had faſted and prayed and laid their hands on them they ſent them away.*

Yea I proceed further, and ſay that 'tis the hands of the *Preſbytery* that muſt be laid on. It is only Miniſters that have the power to ordain miniſters. People have a right to chuſe their own miniſters, but it is only thoſe that are ordained themſelves, that have power to ordain others. I believe I may challenge any one to produce any one thing, in favour of *lay ordination*

in

the whole New Teſtament. I thank God there is no occaſion in this land, to conſider what might be lawful in caſe of ſome urgent neceſſity.

I muſt not longer inſiſt here, enough has been ſaid to ſhew that it is neceſſary, in order to a man's being a good Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, not only that he be qualified for the office, but that he be regularly introduced into it.

3. I now proceed to ſay thirdly, that in order to a man's proving himſelf a good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, it is neceſſary that he faithfully diſcharge the duties of the office.

Whatever the world may think of it, the miniſtry is very far from being a *ſine cure*; as it is an honorable office, ſo it is a laborious ſervice! And he that does not faithfully do the duties of the office, by no means deſerves the character of a good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, how well ſoever he may be qualified for the miniſtry. Yea the better qualified he is, ſo much the more inexcuſable is he, if his duty is neglected. Here it may be profitable to deſcend into particulars, and I would ſay in the firſt place.

1. They muſt faithfully perform the more private duties of their office, otherwiſe they are not worthy of the character of a good Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt.

They muſt be much in their cloſets, and often upon their knees, in prayer to God for the people of their charge; commending them to the father of mercies. The Miniſters of Chriſt ſhould imitate our great high prieſt, who is aſcended into

the heavens, and who ever lives making interceſſion for his church and people; and if they are faithful they will not neglect this duty; they will bear their people upon their hearts continually, and when they come before God to aſk mercy for themſelves, they will carry their flocks with them; repreſent their ſtate to the great ſhepherd, and aſk for them the particular mercies which they ſtand in need of, whether they relate to ſoul or body, time or eternity.

Is it a time of degeneracy among our people? Does iniquity abound, and is the love of many waxen cold? The good Miniſter will in his retirement, when he can unboſom himſelf without offence, lament it before God, and earneſtly ſeek the outpouring of his ſpirit, to awaken, convince, enliven and quicken them.

Or is it a day of diſtreſs, through war, ſickneſs, &c.? The good miniſter who ſympathizes with his people in all their troubles, doth not fail with ardour and importunity, to interceed for the removal of theſe judgments, and for the ſanctification of them. In a word, be the ſtate of his people what it will; whether they are in proſperity or adverſity, the good miniſter lays their caſe before God. And he not only makes mention of them in his prayer, but he labours fervently in prayer for them, that they may ſtand perfect and compleat in all the will of God. Again,

The good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt is much in prayer in ſecret for himſelf. He is ſenſible of his own inſufficiency for the great work, to which he is

called

called, and knows that his sufficiency is of God, and therefore betakes himself to the throne of grace, and seeks needed direction and assistance. And when he looks back and enquires how he has discharged his trust, in times past, it often brings him upon his knees in deep humiliation, and fills his mouth with bitter complaints against himself.

And alas, how many good ministers have occasion to take up that sorrowful complaint, *We have laboured in vain, we have spent our strength for nought.* This is a heart-breaking thing to them; it often brings them upon their knees before God; They weep and mourn in secret places upon this account; it fills their hearts with grief and their mouths with lamentations, that they do no more good in the world; that their labour as to so many is lost; that the word by them dispensed from time to time, instead of being a savour of life unto life, is to many a savour of death unto death. Again,

The good minister of Jesus Christ is faithful in his study. I have already taken notice, that some good degree of knowledge is necessary previous to his entering into the ministry, otherwise he is not qualified for the office: And I now add that they should not content themselves with those degrees of knowledge, which they have, when they first enter on their work; but having laid a good foundation, they should be continually building upon it—labouring to enlarge their stock, and encrease in knowledge, that so they

may

may be thoroughly furnished to every good work. And in order to this, it is necessary that they should closely apply themselves to their studies, and especially to the study of divinity. They must give attendance to reading, especially to the reading of the sacred writings. The ministers of Christ are not now to expect to be taught by immediate revelation, as the apostles were on the day of pentecost; No, God has given us his word, to this we must repair, and by hard study, and close application, endeavour to find out the mind and will of God therein revealed. And that minister who does not thus do, as far as his constitution and circumstances will allow, is undoubtedly defective in his duty. However, it must be remembered, that the geniuses of persons are different. Some do things with more ease and dispatch than others. The health of some will not allow that unremitted application to study and reading, that others can bear without inconvenience: And some have more necessary avocations than others. They are obliged to labour in the field, and cannot allow themselves so much time in their study as is to be desired. All these things are to be considered; necessity has no law, our outward necessities must be supplied; our health taken care of; and our particular genius consulted; and people have no cause to complain, if the work of the ministry is faithfully performed.

Again, The good minister is faithful in his dealing with souls, who privately repair to him for

for assistance under their trials, temptations, darkness and difficulties of various kinds. I think it cannot reasonably be expected of ministers, that they should go from house to house, through their respective parishes, and by particular enquiry acquaint themselves with the state of their flocks. This would take up so much of their time, that sufficient would not be left for the other duties of their office.

It seems to me to be rather the duty of the people, if they want the advice and assistance of their minister, to repair to them, and freely open their case. And then if they are good ministers of Jesus Christ, they will do all they can for their assistance, by advice instruction, warning and comfort as the case requires: They will endeavour to enlighten the ignorant, awaken the stupid, confirm the wavering, resolve the doubting, support the tempted, and comfort the afflicted, and this is a part of their duty which calls for the exercise of a great deal of wisdom and prudence. It requires *the tongue of the learned, to know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.*

Solomon says, *a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver*; but a word unseasonably spoken may be of dangerous consequence. Perhaps there is no part of a minister's duty that requires more wisdom, than the treating with persons under soul concerns. It is often very difficult to determine when to cherish conviction and when to administer comfort: And the good minister is concerned neither to drive souls to

despair,

deſpair, nor yet to heal the wounds of his people ſlightly.

Again, The good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt is circumſpect in his whole walk and behaviour before his people: he is an example to his people; practiſes thoſe duties he inculcates upon them, and does not indulge in thoſe vices, for which he reproves others, but goes before his people in the practice of every virtue, cauſing the light of his example ſo to ſhine before men, that they ſeeing his good works may glorify our father which is in heaven, and then he may boldly call upon them and ſay, as holy Paul, *Be ye followers of me, even as I alſo am of Chriſt.*

This is an eſſential ſtroke in the character of the *good Miniſter.* Without a ſober regular life, we cannot be good men, much leſs good miniſters. If miniſters are not men of good morals, they diſhonor their office and do diſhonor to him that employs them, and probably will do infinitely more hurt to religion by their example, than they can poſſibly do ſervice to it, by their preaching: For though they ſhould ſpeak with the tongues of men and of angels, yet their preaching would be little regarded, while the wickedneſs of their lives demonſtrated that they were not in earneſt, and paid no regard to it themſelves.

However, though miniſters are under peculiar obligations to be ſtrictly virtuous in their lives, yet there are none of us, but what need the candour of our people. They ſhould remember that we are but men, men of like paſſions; and

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we may reaſonably hope that they will not cenſure thoſe things in us which are not really vicious. Cheerfulneſs and gaiety are in themſelves innocent. And perhaps, as one obſerves, "too ſtiff a gravity and too rigid a ſeverity in miniſters, may diſſerve religion as much as an unbecoming indecent levity." I now paſs on to ſay,

2. They muſt faithfully do the more public duties of their office, otherwiſe they are not worthy of the character of *good Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt.*

Here I would ſay particularly, that as the miniſter is the mouth of the congregation to God in prayer, and leads in that ſolemn part of Divine Worſhip; ſo he is concerned to prepare himſelf for that duty, that both matter and manner may be acceptable through Jeſus Chriſt, in whoſe name he always comes to the father, and through whom alone he hopes to be accepted.

In order to this he conſiders what ſins are to be confeſſed; what bleſſings are needed for ſoul and body; for himſelf and people; for the church of God, and for the whole world. He conſiders what mercies they have received which call for thankful notice; that ſo he may order his ſpeech right before God. That his prayers may be pertinent, and well adapted to the circumſtances of thoſe who offer them. His thoughts are cloathed in language that is plain and eaſy to be underſtood, that ſo the whole congregation may join with him and pray with the underſtanding; for as the apoſtle ſpeaks, *If we pray in an unknown tongue our underſtanding is unfruitful.* Again, The

The good minister is not only concerned that the matter of his prayers be suitable and intelligibly expressed, but also that that they come from a heart raised and warmed and filled with all devout affection.

While he is adoring that great God before whom the seraphims veil their faces, with what holy awe and reverence does he perform it!

How low does he sink while making confession of sin, and how ready to aggravate his guilt? So in thanksgiving he is concerned that every word should flow from a heart filled with love and gratitude to the father of the Universe, who is good to all, and whose tender mercies is over all his works. Again,

The good minister labours to possess his mind with a sense of his need of the divine blessings, and of the importance of obtaining them, that so his heart may be earnestly engaged, while he is offering up the prayers of the people. And if at any time he is lifeless in this duty (as is sometimes the case with the best of men) it is his grief and burthen, and he does not fail with shame and blushing to lament it before God in secret.

Again, The good minister of Jesus Christ faithfully preaches *his* word to his people.

Preaching the word is one great and important part of the minister's work.

The Apostle Paul charges Timothy, *preach the word*, and the good minister is concerned to do his duty faithfully. As Christ has committed to his ministers the glorious Gospel of the blessed

God

God, ſo the good miniſter takes care to preach *that* and *that only*. The apoſtle ſays, *If any man teach otherwiſe, and conſent not to wholeſome words, even the words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and to the doctrine which is according to godlineſs, he is proud knowing nothing.* It is required of Miniſters that *they hold faſt the faithful word as they have been taught*; that they *ſpeak the things which become ſound doctrine*; that they preach the preaching which God bids them, and that they do not preach for doctrines the commandments of men. The good miniſter conſiders himſelf as Chriſt's Ambaſſador, and therefore delivers his meſſages, and accordingly all the doctrines which he preaches are taken from the word of God, the ſcriptures of truth. It does not ſatisfy him that a doctrine harmonizes with the ſentiments of any man or body of men, however great or venerable. His only enquiry is, *What ſaith the ſcripture?* And whatever he finds to be matter of Divine Revelation, with reſpect to any important point: That he does not ſcruple to preach to his people; even though it ſhould expoſe him not only to obloquy and reproach, but to perſecution and ſufferings. That man who has not fortitude enough to preach up any important doctrine, which he finds to be matter of divine revelation, is not worthy the character of a good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt. It is certainly our duty, as to preach nothing but the word of God, ſo not to ſhun to declare the whole council of God, i. e, upon important points.

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There is certainly a great difference in divine truths in respect of their importance, some are necessary to be known, others we may safely be ignorant of, yea some things that are matter of divine revelation, the generality of our people have neither ability nor leisure thoroughly to examine. Nor do I think it is the duty of ministers to perplex the minds of their illiterate hearers with speculations upon abstruse subjects, which men of letters and leisure, are not able to investigate.

And it appears to me specially imprudent to deal much in controversy; I can see no good end that it can answer, and I am sure many bad consequences are like to arise from it; particularly a contentious disputatious temper, which eats out the very vitals of religion, and destroys that charity which is the characteristic and glory of the christian. It is no mark therefore of a bad minister, that he does not deal much in these points ——On the contrary the good minister will insist chiefly on truths of the greatest importance, such as the being, perfection and works of God---especially the great work of our redemption by Jesus Christ; special care will be taken to explain the way of salvation; to open the nature and necessity of faith and repentance. And I must think that minister very defective in his duty, who neglects to urge the absolute necessity of purity of heart, and holiness of life; because it exposes him to the odium of Solifidians and Antinomians, and he is in danger of being malingned as an Arminian,

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Legalliſt, &c. for though our people are not to be taught to depend upon the merit of their works yet holineſs of heart and life are to be preſſed as *that* without which they cannot ſee God. Thus the Apoſtle directs Titus, chapter 3d, verſe 8th. *This is a faithful ſaying, and theſe things I will that thou affirm conſtantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works, theſe things are good and profitable unto men.* I ſhall only add under this head, that as the good miniſter urges the Chriſtian duties, ſo he enforces them with chriſtian motives; with the arguments of the goſpel, ſuch particularly as a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments.

And whoever thus preaches, does in the true apoſtolic ſenſe preach Chriſt. Preaching Chriſt is nothing more nor leſs than preaching the great and important doctrines of the Goſpel.

But I muſt not enlarge here, but go on to ſay, that the good miniſter is not only concerned that the doctrines which he preaches are true, but that they are ſeaſonable truths, well adapted to the ſtate and circumſtances of his people. The good miniſter is concerned to know the ſtate of his flock, and attentively conſiders the diſpenſations of Divine Providence towards them, ſo that he may come to them with a word in ſeaſon. A great deal depends upon rightly timeing things. That is beautiful at one time that is unſeemly at another, and much miniſterial prudence and wiſdom is requiſite in order to nick favorable opportunities. It is given, as part of the character of a

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wiſe Steward, by our bleſſed Lord, that he gives his houſhold their meat in *due ſeaſon*, and it is part of the character of a good miniſter that he feeds his flock with ſeaſonable truths; ſuch as they can bear; ſuch as they need; ſuch as, all things conſidered, is like to do them moſt good.

But I muſt not enlarge here, but go on to ſay, that the good miniſter is not only careful with reſpect to the matter of his ſermons, but alſo that his thoughts are cloathed in ſuitable language. If the matter of our ſermons is ever ſo good, and the ſentiments ever ſo juſt and weighty, yet if they are expreſſed in *an unknown tongue*, the audience cannot be edified.

The good miniſter deſires to be underſtood, and therefore ſpeaks in the moſt plain, eaſy, and intelligible language, which he can. He adapts himſelf to the underſtanding of his hearers, and with the Apoſtle Paul, *in the church had rather ſpeak five words with his underſtanding, that by his voice he might teach others alſo, than ten thouſand words in an unknown tongue.* By quoting Hebrew, Greek and Latin, --by flights of Poetry and flouriſhes of rhetoric, a miniſter may get the applauſe of weak people, who conſider it as an evidence of deep learning: But I am ſure it has no tendency to do good to ſouls.

However a miniſter needs to avoid a low groveling ſtile. When he is treating ſo high and noble a ſubject he ſhould not grovel in the duſt, but ſhould keep a due mean, between a low flatneſs, and the pompoſity of ſome writers who ſeem to aim more at ſound than ſenſe.

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The rule given by Ariſtotle is this, "the true dignity of diction is preſerved, if it bears ſome proportion to the things which are to be expreſſed: And it is thus when matters of a grand nature are not ſpoken of in a mean way, nor things of a low kind cloathed with pompous and ſublime words." And Cicero ſpeaks of it as the greateſt fault an orator can commit "to ſpeak in a ſtile and manner not adapted to the underſtanding of the hearers." As the uſe of words is to convey our ideas, ſo *that* ſtile is the beſt which conveys the ſenſe of the ſpeaker moſt clearly and conciſely.

Let me add further upon this head, that the manner of the delivery is a matter not unworthy the attention of the good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt. And it is pity that it is no more attended to by the miniſters of Chriſt than it is. It has been obſerved of the Engliſh preachers, "none preach better, none deliver worſe."

Gravity becomes the miniſter every where, but is never more becoming than in the pulpit, when delivering the divine meſſages to the people. Then as one obſerves, the merry jovial air are highly offenſive—the ſour diſtorted countenance very unbecoming—the whinning tone and noiſy yell very grating.—Every man cannot make an orator, but moſt men might be made tolerable ſpeakers, if proper care was taken of them while young. It is a pity that more pains are not taken with youth, in our colleges, to form them for public ſpeakers.

There is certainly a great deal depending upon the

the delivery of a ſermon---a diſcourſe is better underſtood for being proporly delivered---more like to take hold, make impreſſion, and have laſting influence.

But I muſt leave this, and proceed to ſay, the good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt will faithfully adminiſter the ſacraments of the New-Teſtament, baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper, in their proper ſeaſon, to ſuch as are qualified for them, and to none but ſuch.

And laſtly, he will alſo with the conſent of the brethren, adminiſter the cenſures of the church to thoſe who are obnoxious to them, without favor or affection.

As the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed to him, and as Chriſt has made him ruler over his houſhold, ſo the good miniſter will not fail to do his part to uphold the government and diſcipline of his church; in this, as in every other part of duty, taking the goſpel of Chriſt for his directory.

Thus I have attempted the character of the good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt---the draught is rough---much more might have been ſaid,---But I have left myſelf but little room for the ſecond thing propoſed, where much, very much might be ſaid, and it is high time to come to it.

Secondly, my brethren will permit me to remind them, and eſpecially myſelf of the obligation we are under, ſo to behave in the miniſtry, as that we may merit the character of good miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt.

I do not pretend to ſuggeſt any thing new upon the ſubject; any thing but what you have often conſidered. I aim only to ſtir up your pure minds by way of remembrance; and the time will allow me only juſt to hint at ſome of the many powerful motives, which offer themſelves to engage us faithfully to do the duties of the miniſtry. Here then,

It is a great honor, that Chriſt has conferred upon us, by entruſting us with this office. The prieſthood was always eſteemed honorable. This was the reaſon why Aaron and his family were ſo envied by their brethren. They are employed in the moſt noble ſervice, and if they are faithful ought to be eſteemed worthy of double honor. Now the conſideration of the diſtinguiſhing honour which Chriſt has put upon us, ſhould be an incentive to us, to be faithful to execute our truſt, and behave honorably in our offices. Again,

Chriſt has committed a great truſt to us,---He has committed his goſpel to us. Thus the Apoſtle ſpeaks,---I. *Tim.* i, 11, *according to the glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God, which was committed to my truſt.* He has alſo put the ſouls of his people into the hands of his miniſters, and committed them to their care; and theſe are infinitely more valuable than their bodies and eſtates. Now has Chriſt repoſed with us ſuch an invaluable treaſure? Has he committed to us the ſouls which he has bought with his own blood? It will be extremely diſhonorable, yea mean and baſe, if we ſhould abuſe his confidence, betray ſuch a truſt, and act unfaithfully. Again, My

My brethren, let us consider that the vows of God are upon us. At our ordination, we solemnly engaged faithfully to perform the duties of our office; This we did in the presence of God, and before his people; and what an awful thing will it be to be found guilty of the breach of such solemn engagements? O Sirs, we have sworn, and for our own souls sake let us perform it. Again,

I hope we have all of us some regard to the honor of Christ, and to the interest of his kingdom in the world.

It was with a view to serve these great ends that the Christian ministry was instituted, and I trust that these were our views in undertaking the work; and if we keep these great objects in sight they will powerfully stimulate us on to the faithful discharge of the duties of our office. And let us never forget, how deeply Christ is wounded, by the misconduct and falls of his ministers; and how greatly religion has suffered by this means; and may the consideration of this have its proper influence; and I am sure if it has, it will make us very watchful, that we do not through our unfaithfulness, and misbehavior, give occasion to the enemies of christianity to blaspheme.

Again, I presume we have all of us some love to the souls of our people, and that our heart's desire and prayer for them is that they may be saved. Let us then earnestly endeavor their salvation, and in order to this, let us in every respect faithfully do our duty to them. They may reasonably doubt our love to them if we suffer them to

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go on in the broad road to deſtruction, and uſe no means to reclaim them; yea, if we do not inſtruct, reprove, rebuke, exhort, and in the goſpel way compel them to come in that they may be ſaved. O Sirs, let us cheriſh within our breaſts the tendereſt concern for the beſt intereſt of our people, and this will be a powerful motive to faithfulneſs. Yea, if we are qualified for the miniſtry, in other reſpects, and have a proper regard for the ſouls of our people, we cannot well be otherwiſe, than good Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt.

But, my brethren, if we had no other motive, one would think, that love to our own ſouls would be ſufficient to excite us to prove ourſelves good miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt.

Miniſters have a double bond upon them to be faithful, inaſmuch as their own ſouls, and in ſome ſenſe the ſouls of their people lie at ſtake. Thus the Apoſtle urges Timothy, I. Eph. iv, 16. *Take heed unto thyſelf and unto thy doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this, thou ſhalt ſave thyſelf and them that hear thee.* The time is coming when we muſt give an account of our Stewardſhip, and then the ſouls which are committed to our care will be required of us. We ſhould therefore watch for ſouls as they that muſt give account: otherwiſe we cannot give up our account with joy.

We are ſet as watchmen, it is our duty faithfully to warn the people when danger approaches.—If we ſleep upon the watch, or if we neglect to give the people warning, and the ſword come, and any of our people be taken; his blood will be required at our hands. See Ezek. xxxiii, 6. And

what an awful thing will it be to have the blood of ſouls to anſwer for at that day? How ſhall we hold up our heads under the charge of it? Unfaithful miniſters muſt expect a heavy puniſhment, an awful doom. But then my brethren, if we are faithful to Chriſt, our great Lord, and to the ſouls which are committed to our care; if we are indeed good miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt, even tho' our labors ſhould not be ſucceeded; yet our reward is ſure, *although Iſrael be not gathered, yet ſhall we be glorious in the eyes of the Lord.*

But if God ſhould concur with our ſincere endeavours for the good of ſouls, and make us ſucceſsful inſtruments of awakening, convincing and converting ſinners; and of building up his church in the word. Then we may expect, when it ſhall pleaſe God to remove us from the ſphere in which he has placed us here, to ſhine with peculiar luſtre in the orbs above. For God has aſſured that *they that are wiſe ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteouſneſs, as the ſtars forever and ever.*

My Brethren, we have powerful motives to do our duty faithfully, and I cannot take leave of you, without earneſtly wiſhing that we may, all of us, feel the weight of them, and live under the influence of them. Then ſhall we be good miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt.

It is time I turned myſelf to this my younger brother, who is now to be introduced into the miniſtry, and at whoſe deſire, I now ſtand in this deſk. My Dear Sir, We hope that God has qualified you for the work of the miniſtry, and you

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are now to be introduced into the office, by the impoſition of hands, and to have the overſight of this church and congregation of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſpecially committed to you.

Nothing remains but that I exhort you faithfully to diſcharge the duties of the office, and prove yourſelf a *good miniſter* of Jeſus Chriſt. This is what Chriſt requires of you. This is what this people juſtly expect from you, and to this you are preſently to receive a ſolemn charge in the name of the Lord Jeſus. It will be an awful thing if you ſhould break theſe ſolemn vows, and betray the great and important truſt which is to be committed to you, You will hereby greatly diſhonour Chriſt, and injure Chriſtianity—You will endanger the precious ſouls of the dear people of your charge, and not only ſo, but endanger your own ſalvation.

Theſe things I hope you have conſidered with ſerioufneſs, and that it is your fixed ſettled reſolution faithfully to do your duty.

Now if you would prove yourſelf a good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, you muſt be much in your cloſet, and upon your knees, and in prayer to God for yourſelf and people; ſeeking the divine preſence and aſſiſtance, and commending yourſelf, miniſtratrations and flock to the God of all Grace and Mercy.

You muſt be much in your ſtudy, treaſuring up uſeful knowledge wherewith to feed your flock & particularly let me recommend to you the diligent ſtudy of the ſacred ſcriptures, which are able to make the man of God perfect——And I would eſ-

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pecially adviſe you to read the New Teſtament in the original tongue, and do not loſe ſight of the main ſcope and deſign of the writer. This you will find to be a great help to the underſtanding the particular paſſages. Yet after all you are to expect to meet with things in the ſacred writings which are hard to be underſtood.

However though you ought not to neglect your ſtudies, yet prudence is to be exerciſed here.

Many miniſters have hurt their health, injured their uſefulneſs, yea ſhortened their days, by too ſedentary a life, and too cloſe application to ſtudy. And as your conſtitution is not very firm and robuſt; let me adviſe you to mingle a good degree of exerciſe with your ſtudying, and to ſtudy while you exerciſe. Neceſſity has obliged me to this, and I know by experience, that it is no very difficult thing for a man to get into a habit of thinking, while walking or riding. And if miniſters did more towards preparing their public diſcourſes on the horſe, and leſs in the ſtudy, it would be more for their health, and in no degree injurious to their people.

But to return, as it is your duty to ſtudy, and particularly to ſtudy the ſacred writings, ſo you muſt do it with a view to find the truth. In order to this, you muſt be impartial in your ſearch and examination, not bending the ſcriptures to your preconceived notions, but honeſtly grounding your ſentiments upon the ſcriptures. And having diligently ſought out the truth, you are to communicate it to the people; not holding back any thing that may be profitable to them; neither

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from thoſe who ſhall repair to you privately, for inſtruction and advice, nor from the congregation, in your publie preaching. I ſay *any thing that is profitable*, becauſe there are many things which it is well enough for men of leiſure to exerciſe their thoughts about, that are not worth while to trouble a common audience with. Let me particularly adviſe you not to deal in controverſial matters: it has I am perſuaded done much more hurt than good. Let your preaching be chiefly upon the important truths and duties of chriſtianity. Theſe truths explain and confirm with arguments taken from ſcripture and reaſon, and endeavour to eſtabliſh your hearers in a well grounded belief of them, and theſe duties urge upon their practice, and enforce them with the motives and arguments of the goſpel; and in a word, for I find the time will not allow me to go over the ſeveral parts of your duty again, *Study to ſhew yourſelf a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* Let your prayers be devout and fervent; your preaching ſolid, weighty and ſcriptural; and above all let your life be exemplary. Conſciencioufly do your duty, and then ſhall you be a Good Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt: Then may you hope for the preſence of Chriſt with you in your miniſtry; then may you expect to paſs thro' the world with honor, or however that be, you may be aſſured of meeting acceptance with Chriſt and of a glorious reward in a future world.

I would only aſk your patience further while I ſay a few things to the church and congregation, who have called us here at this time.

Dear

Dear brethren, when in the laſt year we were called to condole with you upon a very melancholy occaſion, viz. the removal of our late Rev. Paſtor and our dear brother, we felt with you and we felt for you. The death of ſo worthy a man, ſuch a faithful friend, exemplary Chriſtian, and pious miniſter, as was your Mr. Parſons, was enough to draw tears from all our eyes. My Brethren, we were filled with compaſſion for you, when we ſaw you as ſheep without a ſhepherd: And when we conſidered the ſtate of the country in general, and your particular circumſtances, we were full of fears, leſt you would long continue in your deſtitute condition. But lo, the great and diſtinguiſhing goodneſs of the great head of the church to you. Our tears are ſcarce dried up for the death of the father, before we are called to aſſiſt in the ordination of the ſon, and it gives me particular pleaſure that the ſon is riſen up inſtead of the father, and that my friend and brother has left a ſon to ſucceed him, and enter into his labour, now he himſelf is gone to reſt. My brethren I know of none like minded who will naturally care for your ſtate.

As I partook with you in your ſorrows, ſo I do alſo in your joy. I heartily bleſs God, who has led you to the choice of his ſervant, who is now to be ſet over you in the Lord. I heartily wiſh he may be continued *long*, to do ſervice to you and yours, and to the church of God, and that he may prove himſelf *a good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt*. And this is to wiſh you a great bleſſing. I hope you eſteem it ſo, and will eſteem him highly

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love for his works ſake. But are you deſirous have in him a good miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt? exhorted then to pray for him. It is a people's uty and 'tis your intereſt to pray for your mi-iſter. Your miniſters need your prayers. Their ork is great and difficult. Their temptations e many, and they are but men, and of them-ves not ſufficient for ſo great a work. They erefore need the prayers of their people, as well their own; and if they are good miniſters, they ill deſire it. How often does the Apoſtle be-eak the prayers of the churches, and ſay *brethren ay for us.*

2. Keep him from carefulneſs. If miniſters e reduced to ſtreights, and difficulties to get a li-elihood, it muſt neceſſarily take off their minds om their proper buſineſs. Let your miniſter erefore live without care of this ſort—the care ſouls is enough for him—ſee that he is com-rtably ſupported—let him be very much inde-endent—the dependence of miniſters is one of ir greateſt temptations to unfaithfulneſs.

And my brethren, let me recommend it to you be kind to your miniſter in a private way. Lit-e things ſent unto his family, which you would ver feel the want of, will not only refreſh your iniſter's bowels, but his heart alſo—it will be honor to you, help him to live decently, and hat is more, it will be a great encouragement him in his work, as he will conſider it, as a to-n of your love and reſpect. This I ſpeak from one experience among that kind and good ople, with whom Providence has caſt my lot.

3.

3. Take care that you do nothing to dishearte and discourage him in his work. Do not be seve upon every little infirmity you may observe in him---remember he is but a man---beware of a captious, contentious spirit, which when it prevail among a people, prodigiously deadens the spirit of ministers. If thou hast ought against thy mi nister, go and tell him of it betwixt thee and him alone—do not tell half the parish of it, be fore you speak of it to himself, and when you tell him of it, observe the Apostle's direction and *treat him as a father*---he will esteem you the more and love you the better for it. Lastly, do not give your minister occasion to complain tha he labours in vain, and spends his strength for nought and in vain. This is a very discouraging heart-breaking thing to ministers. Attend upon his administrations, and let him see that you pro fit by them; this will wonderfully comfort and animate him in his work; enliven his hea t raise his spirits, and quicken his diligence. And O that God would give him grace so to take heed to himself, and to the ministry, which he shall re ceive of the Lord Jesus, and you so to hear and profit by his ministrations, as that he may at last present himself and you before the throne of God without spot, with exceeding great joy. So be it Lord Jesus, Amen and Amen.

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*F I N I S.*